



U.S. SENATE COMMITTEE ON

Finance

SENATOR CHUCK GRASSLEY, OF IOWA - CHAIRMAN

<http://finance.senate.gov>

For Immediate Release

Wednesday, April 9, 2003

Grassley Advances Social Services Funding Increase for States

WASHINGTON -- Sen. Chuck Grassley, chairman of the Committee on Finance, today won Senate passage of \$1.375 billion in increased funding for the Social Services Block Grant program, which gives states the resources to serve millions of children and families in crisis.

"These aren't frivolous programs," Grassley said. "The states use this money to stop child abuse, to protect the elderly from neglect, and to keep developmentally disabled individuals involved in enriching, safe programs. This money pays to lift up people who might otherwise fall through the cracks."

Grassley worked to include the funding increase in his *Charity Aid, Recovery, and Empowerment (CARE) Act*, which establishes a series of tax incentives to increase charitable giving. Today the full Senate overwhelmingly passed the legislation, including the social services funding increase.

The bill increases funding for the Social Services Block Grant program that Congress had reduced over the last several years. This bill increases program funding by \$1.375 billion over the next two fiscal years. Upon final approval, funding will go from \$1.7 billion to \$1.975 billion in fiscal year 2003 and from \$1.7 billion to \$2.8 billion for fiscal year 2004. In addition, the bill increases the proportion of Temporary Assistance to Needy Families welfare funds that states can transfer to the Social Services Block Grant program.

In Iowa, more than 119,708 children and adults in fiscal year 2000 benefitted from Social Services Block Grant-funded services.

The text of Grassley's speech on the Senate floor in favor of the program funding increase follows.

Statement of Senator Chuck Grassley
Social Services Block Grant Provisions in the CARE Act
April 9, 2003

Mr. President, I rise today to speak in support of a key provision in the CARE Act, the restoration of \$1.375 billion for the Social Services Block Grant Program or SSBG.

As my colleagues know, SSBG is an extremely flexible grant program that states use to pay for a wide variety of social services activities. States have broad discretion over the use of these funds. In recent years, the largest expenditures for services under the SSBG were for child protective

services, children's foster care and prevention and intervention services.

Additionally, SSBG funds go to provide crucial services such as respite care for the elderly, adult protective services, as well as adoption programs.

In 1996, during the debate over welfare reauthorization, the Congress and the states agreed to temporarily decrease SSBG from \$2.8 billion a year to \$2.38 billion a year, until welfare reform was firmly established. The agreement further stipulated that SSBG would be funded at \$2.38 billion per year until FY 03 when it would be restored to \$2.8 billion per year.

Mr. President, we have not lived up to our promise. Funding for SSBG has been reduced considerably. Currently this vital program is funded at \$1.7 billion a year.

This program is very important in my state of Iowa.

There were over 119,708 children and adults benefitting from SSBG-funded services in the state of Iowa in FY2000.

Iowa spent almost half of its \$29 million block grant (48%) on services to persons with disabilities, covering both physically disabled and developmentally disabled persons. Services include adult residential care, adult day care, community-supervised living, sheltered workshops and work activities.

Iowa used \$982,078 in SSBG funds for the prevention of abuse and neglect to elderly and disabled persons, compared to receiving only \$55,927 from the Title VII Elder Abuse under the Older Americans Act.

Mr. President, I worked very hard to ensure that SSBG was included in the CARE Act. The reason why I felt so strongly that it be included in the bill is because I see an SSBG increase as one of the ways we can direct fiscal relief to the states.

States are currently suffering under the worst fiscal crisis since World War II. I am committed to finding ways to assist the states manage this fiscal crisis. I view the inclusion of the restoration of SSBG funds as a good first step toward assisting the states make it through this current crisis.

I appreciate my colleagues' hard work on this bill and look forward to its enactment into law. I thank the chair and yield the floor.